

# THE HANDSHAKE



The Explosive Contact

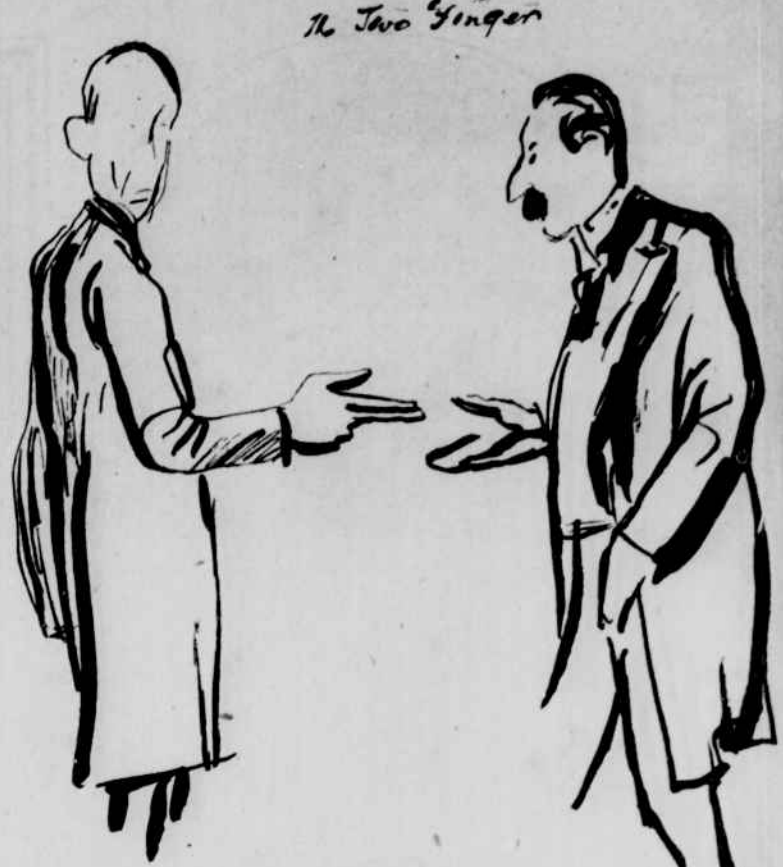


The Pecksniff



The Roosevelt

The Roosevelt



The Two Fingers



The Edward VII

## MANY LANGUAGES ARE SPOKEN BY THE PALMS OF HANDSHAKERS

WHEN Theodore Roosevelt starts on his transcontinental speech-making trip, which he announces he intends to do at an early date, he will add several million handshakes to his record, already a thing of beauty in that there is nothing else like it in the world.

Mr. Roosevelt's hand is thick, leaning to pudgy. There is nothing about it to suggest the artist. It is, moreover, one of the most unpatrician hands you ever saw. But it gives you a powerful grip. It makes you instantaneously a warm friend of the man who controls it. It makes you feel that Mr. Roosevelt likewise is vehemently predisposed in favor of you. You may have come from a small town in Arkansas, through which the great man may have passed once while asleep. And yet the way he shakes hands makes you feel for the rest of your life that Mr. Roosevelt has a peculiarly animated affection for your town, based on his intimate personal knowledge of its fine points.

There are all kinds of handshakes. Handshakers include all of a man's best friends and many of his enemies. The art of shaking hands should be mastered by all Americans, it being a truly American habit. In many European countries kisses are exchanged between men, and an embrace is quite in accordance with even a somewhat formal salutation. We do these things differently here.

### SOME CUSTOMS PREVAILING IN EASTERN LANDS.

An African king requires a visitor to approach him crawling. The natives of the Tonga Islands kiss the soles of the chieftain's feet, while a Tammany politician merely leaves his shoes at Murphy's door. Those admitted into the presence of the "big smokes" in some of the Oriental countries are expected to kowtow, kneel and touch the ground with their foreheads nine times in succession—no time allowed for refreshments, no Saturday half-holidays in the summer, probably because it is always summer where people are willing to act this way, they being crazy with the heat at the time.

Men in this country acknowledge an introduction by extending the right hand in greeting. Hand, in this case, is used in the sense of the whole hand. It is assumed that men will not offer two fingers, or the left hand, one offering as poor as the other, and as likely to go without takers after the first offence. The right hand is the sword hand, and its extension to a friend is emblematic as a proof of peace and as a safeguard against treachery. And yet many a broker has shaken hands with a victim and then sold him stock on margin.

Certain handshakes convey good wishes for the health, happiness and prosperity—all three combined—of the person whose hand is shaken. In getting across this much to be desired result it is not necessary to wring a

hand off the wrist nor press it as in a vise, nor pull it as though it were a bell handle, nor fling your hand at the other person's so as to cause a report.

The hands are almost as good an index to a man's character, habits and profession as his face. If we examine handshakes carefully they tell us a wonderful history in a mute language of their own. They make us realize that man is the wisest of all animals not because he has hands, but that he has hands because he is the wisest of all animals.

Every one has experienced the feeling of confidence and good fellowship expressed by a good, firm clasp of the hand. Also, every one knows the feeling of repulsion and discomfort which comes over one when one is given what is known as a "hand like a cold haddock." An instinctive distrust is awakened in us at a peculiar or uncomfortably individualized method of shaking hands.

The specimen who makes you feel that you have taken hold of the fin of a skate fish extends two fingers which are arranged close together. Its arms

bear an unmistakable likeness to all the others you have met, in that each has a shoulder, elbow, wrist and hand. But its right hand is rigid and stiff and incapable of motion.

We should look for a reason in all such cases, and in the present instance the explanation is to be found in the fact that the hand is essentially the organ of the mind, the medium of its expression, and the instrument whereby its promptings are carried into execution. The hand, in other words, is not a mere appendage, a thing put on the body like an additional movement to a watch.

Therefore, when you examine the specimen closely you find that its framework is built on the principle of the jointed stick, with a round knob at the top, where brains are found in other people. It is one of the few animals that will eat man. Very fond of widows and children—has a way of absorbing their funds. It should be killed in wanton sport.

Mr. Pecksniff was in the habit of clasping his left hand over his "dear friend's" right hand resting in his own

right. This practice may be very effective from a scenic point of view, but it should be borne in mind that all the Pecksniffs are not dead yet.

The bow is also extremely interesting. Louis XIV was a small man, but he was on intimate terms with all the best bows of the period. To him a bow was a matter of supreme importance. It is said that he had fourteen different grades of bow, and was finishing up some new ones when death made him resign, and the work was carried on by the best built men of his court.

The hand is the principal seat of the sense of touch. And of all the senses the most painful to the victim is undoubtedly that of the touch. When you "lamp" one of these hands coming outstretched toward you the best thing to do is to turn the corner at full speed, even though you later find yourself knocked down or knocking down another by the violence of the contact. Such a hand produces the sensation of pain which warns us to fly from the agent which produces that sensation.

It is frequently impossible to evade this type of handshake, which is of a

vigorous and prolonged kind, and possesses other features, including special pressure and continued holding of the hand of the elected. The time which elapses between the sensations of touch and pain is negligible.

This variety of handshaker should be eradicated, but if you are loath to kill outright and will take the time to cut the man up in several pieces and then get the glue pot and put him together again he will be just as valuable to society then as he is at present.

Outstretched arms, sailing far overhead, are sometimes seen in our best circles. Rumor has it that the Prince of Wales (who later became Edward VII) was suffering from a boil under his arm, and consequently was reduced to the necessity of shaking hands up in the air. Society observed and concluded a new style was being instituted. A decayed count brought the fashion to Newport and Americans followed suit. In a rather crowded drawing room where, for the sake of convenience many introductions are made rapidly, these attempts at the altitude record are not commended, nor are they much in vogue. Such handshakes are

giving place to the latest method, in which case the woman in society presents her upturned palm on a line with her waist. The gentleman rests his right palm upon hers for a small second, and all is well.

The studied inclination of the head, a very fleeting smile and a murmur of the name constitute full recognition of an introduction in the eyes of many who regard their bearing as the expression of the corrected form and who look upon an offer of handshaking as a mark of impulsive provincialism.

Some of the most ardent members of the Society for the Suppression of the Warmhearted Handshake hope that the creatures of the opposition, most of whom originated west of the Hudson River, may be totally exterminated, and that not a single skin and only a number of skeleton fragments may be left in the possession of naturalists to tell the strange story of the destruction of human beings.

Let them become like the auk and buffalo, these radical members say. Let their skins be distributed to the Museum of Natural History, Vassar College and such places. Warmheart-

ed handshakers are disliked in some circles more strongly than those persons who carry their umbrellas in the way as to endanger the eyes of the walking up a staircase behind them.

College boys have attractive methods of shaking hands, as a rule, although some young men who have been bitten by the fraternity bug are afflicted with the exclusive spirit, which renders them afraid to shake hands for fear the other party to the transaction may be deficient in grandeur or have wretched taste in neckwear. They fear that an intimacy which they do not desire may be forced on them. Hence they frequently ward off all approaches with a formality that is accompanied by what is known as such circles as the refrigerator bowl.

In making this bow the upper part of the body is bent slightly, as well as the head. The chin should not be poked forward, if gracefulness is to be attained. After leaving the dormitory this bow is relegated to the attic by college men who are engaged in commercial pursuits, as it has been found by experience that it interferes with getting an order for a carload of hoops and staves.

Shaking hands over a Chinese wall, such as is built around the members of some of the exclusive clubs, is an experience that is never repeated except upon the threat of death. There are clubs—not in this city, but in Boston and London—whose atmosphere has been aptly described as suggestive of the fact that a nobleman is lying dead upstairs. Shaking hands in such a place should not be attempted.

### THE ORNAMENTAL HAND, RARE AND USELESS.

We have now reached the consideration of the most beautiful and delicate, but, alas! the most useless and impractical type of hand. This hand is rare, but when you see it you cannot help remarking it. You will recognize it at once by its description. It is very small and delicate, having a thin palm, smooth, fine fingers, long and delicately pointed. It has generally a pretty little thumb.

These hands never command. They establish for themselves far too lofty an ideal to care about earthly domination or material interests of any kind. They are incapable of strife or struggles for glory.

Shaking such a hand, unless you, too, have a soul in the highest state of poetic development, will get you nowhere. It is not even an enjoyable waste of time. If, however, you have something you want to sell, persons with this type of hand will believe anything you tell them without investigation or analysis. Such subjects have high-strung nerves, and are easily fired with wondrous enthusiasm. They will do anything you say, if they like the way you part your hair.

They buy most of the stock issued by the Perpetual Motion Companies.

## BABEL OF TONGUES AS RESULT OF LONG HUNT

"MY MOLTKE," said old Kaiser Wilhelm, "is silent in seven languages." It seems to be the resolution of some that all men shall be silent—or, loquacious, as the case may be; generally the latter—in at least one other language than their own. To that end the propaganda of a universal language is being persistently pushed. Just now they are holding a great Esperanto convention in England, at which men from many lands converse, debate and orate in that "bad Italian" device of a Russian physician, and pour loquacious scorn upon its predecessor, Volapuk, and its would-be successors, Ilo, and Ro, and the Idiom Neutral, and all other inventions of the Modern Babel.

Although now neglected and all but abandoned, Volapuk is to be remembered as the first attempt to construct a new, scientific, universal language. It was put forward by J. M. Schleyer, a South German priest, in 1880, and for a time had great vogue.

### ESPERANTO CONCEIVED BY A RUSSIAN PHYSICIAN.

Then Esperanto appeared, having been broached in 1887 by Dr. L. Zamenhof, a Russian physician, of Bielostok, for patriotic and humanitarian purposes. He saw with grief the quadripartite feuds of Russian, Pole, German and Jew, and conceived the notion that with one common language they would become one harmonious people. His first thought was to revive some dead language, and his second was to construct a new one on scientific principles. Observing that a language is made of compounds and derivatives

from a comparatively small number of roots, he sought at first to make the necessary number of new roots, arbitrary and artificial. Later he decided to select his roots from various languages, giving all impartial representation.

Although there are 2,642 roots in the Esperanto vocabulary there is a strange use of compounds, especially with the prefix "mal," in many cases in which other languages employ roots. Thus "bona" is the word for "good," but instead of another word for "bad" the compound "malbona" is employed. So "amiko" is the word for "friend," but instead of a separate word for "enemy" the compound "mal-amiko" is used. There is a complicated system of diphthongs and an excessive and needless use of the diacritical letters. The general appearance of this "bad Italian," as its critics call it, may be seen in the Esperanto translation of the Lord's Prayer:

### THE LORD'S PRAYER BECOMES UNRECOGNIZABLE.

"Patro nia, kiu estas en la cielo, sankta estu via nomo; venu rekeco via; estu volo via, kiel en la cielo, tiel ankaŭ sur la tero. Pardonu nian ciutagan donu al ni hodiaŭ; kaj pardonu al ni suldojn niajn, kiel ni ankaŭ pardonas al niaj suldantoj; ne konduku nin en tenton, sed liberigu nin de la malbono."

It may be observed in passing that the Esperanto requires five more words and thirty-three more letters than the English version.

But the Academy which had repudiated Volapuk would have nothing to

do with Esperanto, but went on, under Dr. Rosenberger, of St. Petersburg, to develop the Idiom Neutral in 1902. This language has a Romance-Latin vocabulary and a Frenchlike grammar. It professes to be strictly scientific, and therefore to avoid the errors and imperfections of languages which have grown up empirically. Yet there are to be found in it numerous ambiguities and alternate forms of words, and, worst of all, some of those very homonyms which are the chief stock complaint against the English vocabulary. For example, precisely the same word, "kar," stands for the substantive "carriage" and the adjective "dear."

### THE BASES OF ARTIFICIAL LANGUAGES.

Now these and others are all a posteriori languages, based upon pre-existing languages, and every one of them bears some resemblance in appearance to some national tongue. It is an interesting circumstance, however, that no author of an artificial language has taken his own mother tongue for its basis. The German author of Volapuk confessedly drew chiefly upon English, and the Russian inventor of Esperanto turned to all European languages but Russian. It was reserved for an American, a Congregational minister at Marietta, Ohio, to devise an a priori language owing nothing to other tongues, but created original from the beginning. This world speech is called Ilo, and its name is suggestive of the whole language, for it has a vocabulary of short words. With only three letters to a word, a vocabulary of two thousand words is possible,

while by increasing the number to six letters a total of four million is secured—which should be sufficient for any spellbinder or author of a best-seller. What Ilo looks like is shown in a couple of sentences:

"Abi ela siki aco. Aci weme rami abo?"

Now, who would think of saying any such thing to a pretty girl? Yet if a lover does his courting in Ilo it is thus that he must tell her that he loves her and ask her to marry him.

### PICTURESQUE PIDGIN ENGLISH AS A POSSIBILITY.

It may be regarded as passing strange that nobody has yet put forward as a candidate for universal use the widely employed and picturesque speech known as Pidgin English. For it is both a priori and a posteriori in construction, and is the familiar vehicle of thought of many millions more than have ever heard Volapuk, Esperanto, Ilo, Ro, Idiom Neutral and all the rest put together. It draws upon all important existing languages with charming impartiality, and has the immense advantage over the others of thus drawing upon Asiatic as well as European languages and thus being far more truly universal than they. Take, for example, the Pidgin version of the first stanza of Longfellow's "Excelsior":

That nighty time begin chop-chop. One young man walkee, no can stop; Maskey snow—maskey lee! He carry flag wid chop so nice, Topside galow!

Now there are utilized at least four languages. The English elements are obvious. "Maskey" is pure Spanish—

"per mas que," or "in spite of." "Chop," from "chapa," is Hindoo, meaning a stamp, brand or motto, while duplicated into "chop-chop" it means "quickly"—literally, as rapidly as a man can stamp papers—in Anglice, "slap-bang!" Finally, "galow," or "galah," is a pure Chinese expletive, equivalent to "you bet!" Surely the claim of such a flexible, facile and elegant speech to world-wide adoption is not to be lightly disregarded!

Of course, though, there is the good, old English tongue which Shakespeare, Macaulay and Bloodgood H. Cutter contrived to employ as a fairly efficient vehicle of expression. It has existed for a good many years and is used by a considerable number of people. It is growing in use, too—in fact, it is now credited to be the vernacular of more people than any other in the world, at least outside of China and India, and it is doubtful if any one of those countries equals it. Down to the hour of the present writing it is computed that the various European languages figure about as follows in the census of the world:

English	150,000,000
German	130,000,000
Russian	100,000,000
French	70,000,000
Spanish	50,000,000
Italian	50,000,000
Portuguese	25,000,000

So it may be that in spite of the Esperanto Congress and the Akademi Internasional de Lingu Universal the Genius of the Race will work out the problem of a world speech on very different lines from theirs.